

* INFORMATION SERVES THE WHOLE FARM LABOR PROGRAM

by
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One of the impressions I have gained from these conferences during the past four years and through visiting other states, is that each state does things differently. Some states cannot realize why they should be interested in what other states are doing and what they should do to emulate them. During this discussion many factors have been brought up that most states do not agree upon. One point, however, that all states agree upon is education. Most of us see the value of education in our farm labor program. We, in Oregon, believe that information is the handmaiden of education. I think you would all agree that without information our hands would be tied in the recruitment and placement of labor. We cannot help the farmer unless he gives us information as to what he needs. Workers must also have information as to where they can secure jobs. It is valuable to have an Information Assistant. He relieves the State Supervisor of many routine jobs. He knows how to get the information out to the people when it should be sent out. He also knows the value of publicity and gets news out when it is needed and valuable. In Oregon we have an institutional policy which must be met on what news can be released. We have tried three methods of getting out information: first, we used one of our men who spent some time on publicity and most of his time on the farm placement problems. Second, we used a publicity man from the University which was not entirely satisfactory as he had other releases to make for the University. We then secured Bob Fowler who could put in his full time as Information Specialist. This was the best system, although we would be willing to put on a man who could spend 25% of his time on regular extension work and 75% of his time on Farm Labor information work. Of course, this information service would vary according to the various states but it is necessary to have someone who is responsible for the information service of the Extension Farm Labor office.

What did the Farm Labor information man do? He made up a weekly report that was sent out to all offices. He sent out Farm Labor News Notes, which report was used by every radio station in Oregon. He also sent out a newspaper letter that was released to all the newspapers in the state. He acted as picture man. It is important for the Information Specialist to know the County Agents in the state and to work through them in releasing certain information. A good information setup for a state would include an Information Specialist and trained county staffs who would issue news releases for both the newspapers and radios. Our County Agents are now going to release news stories as to what has been done in 1946 and what is expected to be done in 1947.

The Information Specialist should also make personal contacts with the newspapers and radio stations in his state as this will help in getting out information. In 1946, Oregon issued 19 stories to the newspapers, 31 weekly radio scripts, 35 farm labor pictures to be printed and 8 articles for local, state and national publications.

The releases conform to a pattern of material that is released by the State College of Agriculture. By having correct, timely and complete information before the people, we will prevent adverse information being released.

*Presented by J. R. Beck, State Supervisor, Emergency Farm Labor, Extension Service, Oregon State Agricultural College, Corvallis, Oregon, at the Regional Farm Labor Conference of the Cooperative Extension Service and Labor Branch, FMA, U. S. Department of Agriculture, January 17, 1947, at Salt Lake City, Utah.
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